

Message Text

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40

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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R 271715 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4051

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

RS TC/ AMEMBASSY LONDON 2436

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 4971

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: MCAP PFOR IN

SUBJECT: DEFENSE DEBATE

SUMMARY: TWO- DAY PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON NEW DEFENSE BUDGET

REVEALED FOLLOWING SENTIMENTS: 1) ALL PARTIES FAVOR A STRONG
DEFENSE

ESTABLISHMENT; 2) SINO- US " ARMING" OF PAKISTAN JUSTIFIES SOME
EXPANSION AND MAJOR MODERNIZATION; 3) DEFENSE PRODUCTION UNITS ARE
AMONG MOST EFFICIENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR; 4) INDIA' S DESIRE FOR SELF-
SUFFICIENCY IN DEFENSE AFFAIRS ENJOYS HIGH PRIORITY; 5) THE U. S.
SEVENTH FLEET SHOULD STAY OUT OF THE INDIAN OCEAN; AND 6) A SENSE
OF HUMOR IS NOT WIDESPREAD IN THE LOWER HOUSE. END SUMMARY

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1. LOWER HOUSE (LOK SABHA) DISCUSSED DEFENSE BUDGET APRIL 25 AND 26 IN ALMOST DESULTORY, NON- ARGUMENTATIVE MANNER. OPPOSITION PARTIES FOUND LITTLE TO DEBATE, SINCE THEY ALSO FAVOR A STRONG DEFENSE

ESTABLISHMENT. EVEN NUCLEAR WEAPONS (FAVORED BY JANA SANGH AND A FEW INDEPENDENTS) AROUSED LITTLE INTEREST, AS WAS ALSO THE CASE IN PRECEDING FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE (NEW DELHI 4799).

2. MOST SPEAKERS, INCLUDING DEFENCE MINISTER, ALLUDED CRITICALLY TO U. S., CHINESE AND FRENCH ARMS TO PAKISTAN AND USED THIS AS JUSTIFICATION FOR SOME EXPANSION AND MAJOR MODERNIZATION. MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PRODUCTION SHUKLE, IN REVIEWING ACHIEVEMENTS OF HIS MINISTRY, STRESSED EFFICIENCY OF DEFENSE PRODUCTION INDUSTRIES

THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO CIVILIAN NEEDS AND INDIA'S GROWING SELF- RELIANCE

IN MILITARY SUPPLY. SHUKLE EMPHASIZED THAT CURRENT LICENSING/ COLLABORATION ARRANGEMENTS WITH FOREIGN CONCERNS WOULD BE TERMINATED AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE; NEW ARRANGEMENTS WOULD NOT BE CONCLUDED (NEW DELHI 4896).

3. IN REPORTING DEBATE, MOSTLY ON INSIDE PAGES, PRESS NOTED DEFENCE MINISTER JAGJIVAN RAM'S ANSWER TO WRITTEN QUESTION ON U. S. SEVENTH FLEET. RAM SAID SEVENTH FLEET WOULD REPORTEDLY REMAIN IN ASIAN WATERS AND HE UNDERSTOOD ITS OPERATION AREA HAD BEEN EXTENDED TO INCLUDE INDIAN OCEAN. RAM USED THIS TO REITERATE INDIA'S BELIEF THAT FLEETS OF NON- AREA NATIONS SHOULD STAY OUT OF INDIAN OCEAN.

4. ONLY HEAT GENERATED DURING DEBATE INVOLVED FIELD MARSHAL MANEKSHAW'S JOKING REMARK TO A LONDON NEWSPAPER THAT IF HE HAD OPTED FOR PAKISTAN IN 1947, INDIA WOULD HAVE LOST 1971 WAR. A FEW LOK SABHA MEMBERS NOTED HUMOROUS CONTEXT OF REMARKS; MOST, INCLUDING RAM, CHASTIZED MANEKSHAW. SOME SUGGESTED HE MIGHT PROFITABLY STAY IN LONDON.

5. COMMENT: INDIA'S DEFENSE STRATEGY IS BASED ON STRENGTHENING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ITS CONVENTIONAL FORCES, USING INDIAN COMPONENTS TO DEGREE POSSIBLE, WHILE RETAINING NUCLEAR OPTION BY ACQUISITION OF TECHNOLOGY AND EXPERTISE IN CIVILIAN DIRECTED NUCLEAR AND SPACE FIELDS. MODERNIZATION, NOT APPRECIABLE EXPANSION, IS KEY. THIS APPROACH INCLUDES SUCH PROGRAMS AS EXPENDED NAVAL FACILITIES IN ANDAMAN/ NICOBAR ISLANDS

AND

NEW EQUIPMENT FOR INDIAN NAVY. ALLUSIONS TO SINO/ US/ FRENCH ARMS TO
PAKISTAN FURNISH AN ADDITIONAL PRETEXT FOR WHAT INDIA HAD ALREADY
DECIDED ITS NATIONAL INTEREST REQUIRES.

MOYNIHAN

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